

In the WAKE of the NEWS

Originally published in the Chicago Daily Tribune, Aug. 2, 1931

Professional football has gained a definite place on the American sports calendar. Unless mistakes of policy or management occur that place promises to be definite. When first started The Wake had no great enthusiasm for the pro article. That was due to conditions which need not now be elaborated. Most of the elements to which we objected have since been eliminated.

Pro football's main source of supply is the college gridiron. That, in a measure, enhances interest, because the fellows you see playing the pro brand have been seen or read about while collegians and so are familiar to you. The Green Bay Packers, champions of 1930, have just signed Hank Bruder, Red Woodworth, and Frank Baker of Northwestern, Gantenbein of Wisconsin, and others. The Chicago Bears' roster will include only ex-collegians. That is the tendency throughout the national circuit.

When the college boys turned to football, with the advent of "Red" Grange in 1925, we foresaw gradual development and change in the pro sport. However, we always had misgivings whether this money actually was a good thing for the boys. We had no objection to their getting their money after their arduous training and play on campus gridirons, but we feared lest "easy money" might have other disadvantages; that, in short, they might become what is sometimes denominated "athletic tramps."

Partially but not entirely convinced this danger was passing, we sought George Halas, major domo of the Chicago Bears, and said, "George, just what has every member of your 1930 team done in the time intervening since last fall?"

Before recording his answer let us explain that players on the big pro teams receive from \$100 to as high as \$400 per game. Perhaps \$150 would be a fair average. The Bears played 17 games last season, or an estimated earnings average of \$2,500 per man. The players' expenses are paid on the road and their equipment is furnished except shoes, of which two pair costing \$10 to \$18 a pair are necessary. They pay their own board and expenses while in Chicago.

Here is Manager Halas' data to convince us his athletes are not wasting their times and money in the pursuit of professional football:

Dick Nesbitt, Drake – Married and in insurance business in Des Moines.

Bronko Nagurski, Minnesota – Used money to finish school.

Joe Sternaman, Illinois – Part owner in gasoline station.

Laurie Walquist, Illinois – In real estate business with Halas (George) and Kraft.

Bill Senn, Knox – To finish school.

Joe Lintzenich, St. Louis U. – Salesman in St. Louis.

Brumy Brumbaugh, Florida – Potato farm in West Milton, OH.

Walt Holmer, Northwestern – Working in East Moline.

Link Lyman, Nebraska – Used earnings to buy cattle for grazing in Nebraska.

George Trafton, Notre Dame – Real estate after brief ring career.

Don Murry, Wisconsin – His own railway equipment business.

Zuck Carlson, Oregon Aggies – Working in New Mexico.

Danny McMullen, Nebraska – Farming in Belleville, KS.

Paul Schuette, Wisconsin – With father in store at Manitowoc, WI.

Hoot Drury, St. Louis U. – Working in St. Louis.

Luke Johnsos, Northwestern – Salesman for shirt company.

Garland Grange, Illinois – Salesman for stationery and printers' supplies.

Bert Pearson, Kansas Aggies – Farming in Lawrence, KS.

Larry Steinbach, St. Thomas – Loan company in Chicago, part owner of farm in ND.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 27, No. 2 (2005)

Joe Savoldi, Notre Dame – Professional wrestler.

Red Grange, Illinois – Now in Hollywood for part in movie.

According to Halas, many of these boys used their first earnings to liquidate debts contracted while working their way through college.